



Web graphics PixTrix2

How to design great-looking
ads in tiny spaces

Continued ►

Step one: Use a simple photo

Designing in a tiny space has unique requirements. Start by looking for an image that says a lot with a little.



◀ A typical advertisement is full of images and text. Yet the standard Web ad is 120 x 90 pixels at 72 dpi. That's tiny. So how do you shoehorn, say, the city of New York into that speck of real estate? The key when working on the Web is to not try—quite. The space is so small, the resolution so low, and the typical Web page so cluttered with other messages that your microscopic cityscape will be lost. Instead, think *simple*, *bold* and *brief*. Use not the entire city but an icon that represents it—the Statue of Liberty, Empire State Building; you get the idea.

Look for an iconic image, a simple shape, a bold color, a bold angle, high contrast—or, best, all of it.

Think simple, bold and brief The goal is to convey your message with the least amount of visual information. Think icons, symbols and objects. New York City: Statue of Liberty; health care: doctor in a lab coat; kitchen products: stack of bowls, and so on.



Complex . . .



simple



Complex . . .



simple



Complex . . .



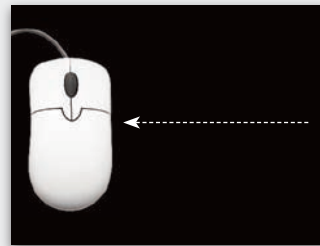
simple

Step two: **Make a simple layout**

Use as few words as possible, and arrange your material simply.



Online class registration involves a lot of hardware, but don't show it all. Instead . . .



Use an iconic object with a simple, familiar shape, and set it against a high-contrast (black) field. Note that *by itself* the mouse does not convey class registration . . .



Add the words . . . but when the words are added, it works just fine. White words tie to the white mouse; university name in gold stands apart.



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You can control the effect of your ad by changing the size of the photo, its angle and the way it's cropped. With so little material to work with, it's important to make every nuance count.

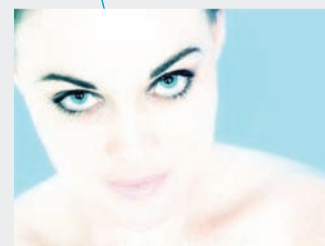
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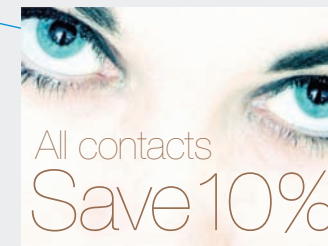
Center is the stable position. Her gaze is direct, deliberate, engaging.



Off-center unbalances the space, creating a light sense of tension.



Angle the image, and her look turns coy. She's attentive, but for how long?



Scale Extremely close up and her eyes become the message. Intense and arresting.





Use text to frame your image

In such close quarters, text and photos must work together, not separately. In fact, the two must form virtually one message. Like a photo, type is graphical, so you can use its style, case, shape, weight and color to complement and strengthen the image.



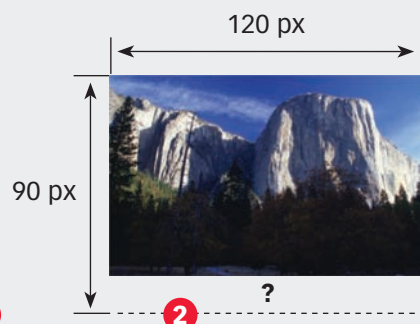
Panorama Definitely not simple, incomparable El Capitan is a case where an entire mountain of granite is the focal point. We could crop, but this image benefits from its distant vantage point, scale and surrounding detail. Adding the green bar separates image from text, limiting the complexity.



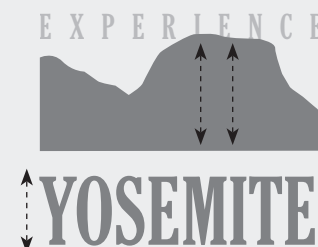
Monument With tighter cropping, the mountain becomes more vertical than horizontal, an effect heightened by its deep shadows. Extremely condensed typeface in mighty uppercase amplifies the effect, welding words and image into a single, powerful message readable at a glance.



Postcard style Designed in the style of an Ansel-Adams print, this treatment is quieter, more gallery-like—although the photo hasn't changed! Gray type on white recedes yet is readable at a glance. Wide spacing makes the space appear horizontal. White "page" floats above the gray field as a single unit.



Use the full image Reduce (1) a standard-size image to 120 pixels wide, which leaves it shallower than 90 pixels (2). Fill the remaining space—plus a little—with a solid field of color eyedroppered from the image (3), then add your type (4). This photo-above-field technique simplifies the space; it is an excellent choice when your image is complex or detailed.



Use part of the image Crop the image to emphasize (or create) a focal point. Then find a typeface that complements or amplifies an attribute of the image. Here, a tall, condensed typeface spanning the page amplifies the mountain's monumental presence. A slight overlap of mountain and the type above it adds depth, pushing the granite wall forward.

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Here, an exciting image is weakened by excessive contrast, a monochromatic color cast, lack of focal point and a busy background. Rescue it by using type to supplement the picture:



Focal point first Crop tightly to give the skateboarder as much presence as possible (1). Note the textured background is busy but visually interesting. You can amplify its effect by using a similarly textured typeface (2). The result is artistic but not easy to read. To remedy this, replace the background with high-contrast black (3) while retaining the textured type. To retain the improved visibility *and* the background texture, use the texture to fill the distressed typeface (4).

Article resources

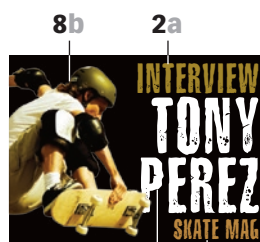
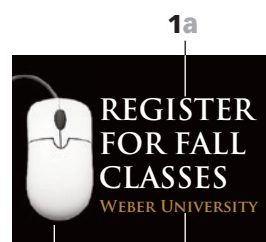
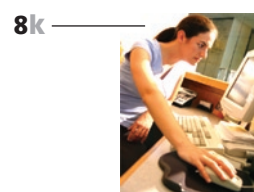


Image row 8e-j (left to right)



Typefaces

1 (a-b) [Trajan Pro Regular](#) | a) 13.5/16 pt
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Images

8 (a-k) [iStockphoto.com](#) | [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#)
[e](#) [f](#) [g](#) [h](#) [i](#) [j](#) [k](#)

Colors

9 C30 M50 Y90 K0

10 C25 M35 Y95 K20

11 C10 M40 Y53 K40

12 C50 M30 Y70 K30

13 C0 M0 Y0 K45

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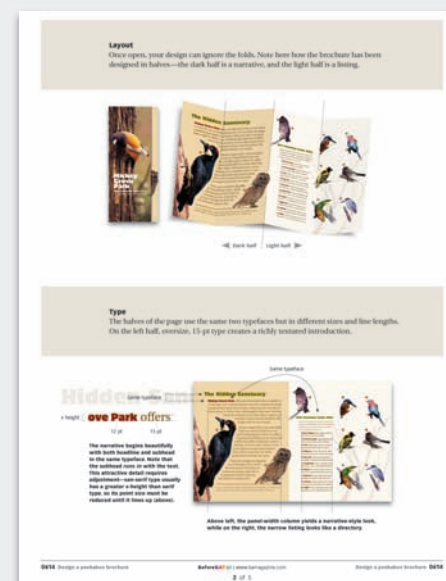


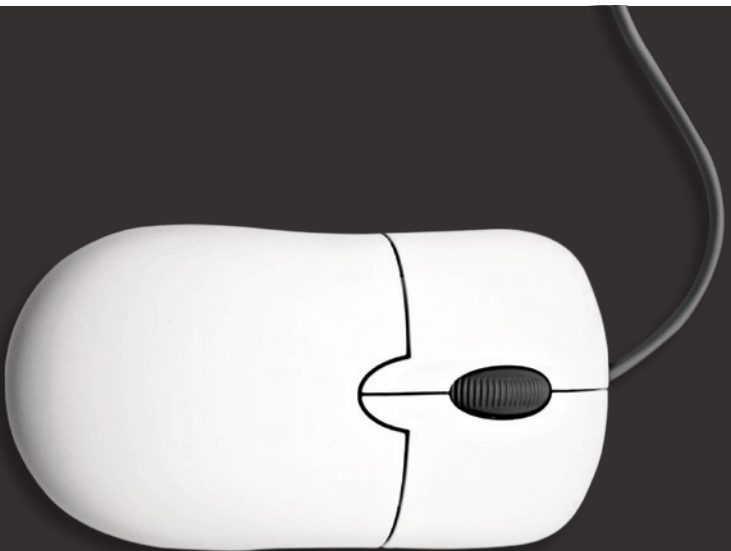
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Presentation format or
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For paper-saver format

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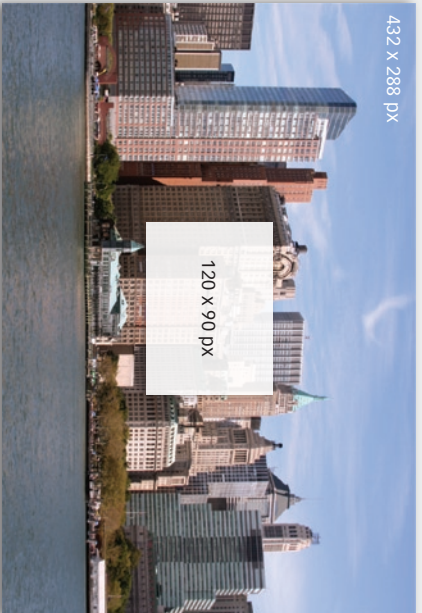


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432 x 288 px

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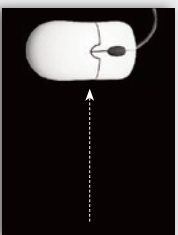
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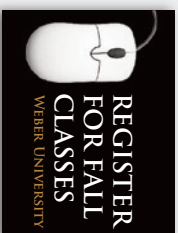
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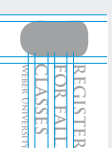
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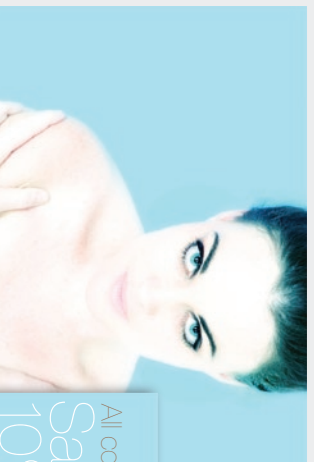
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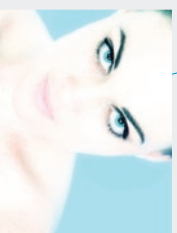
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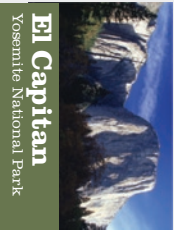


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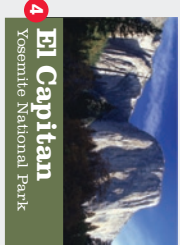
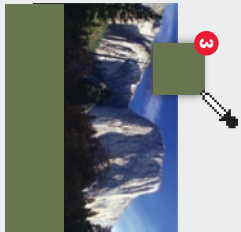
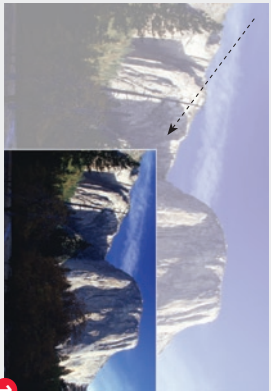
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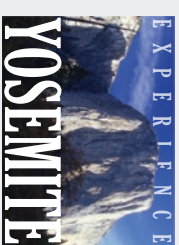
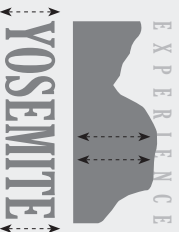
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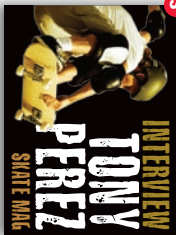
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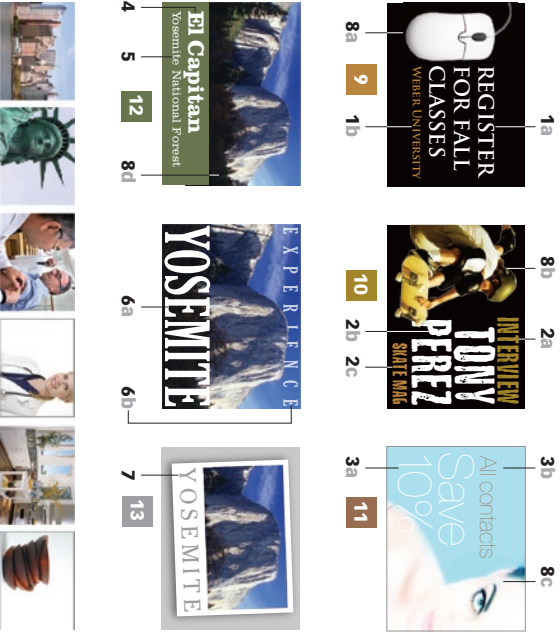


Image row 8a-j (left to right)

8k —

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- 12 C50 M30 Y70 K30
- 13 C0 M0 Y0 K45

Images

- 8 (a-k) [iStockphoto.com](#) | [a](#) [b](#) [c](#) [d](#)
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